

JULY 2020

Far West Ski Association

WHO & WHAT'S NEW FOR 2020-2021

FOREIGN WORKER VISAS SUSPENDED: The Trump Administration has temporarily suspended new foreign worker visas until December 31, 2020. The visas included are L-1 visas for intracompany transfers, H-1Bs for workers in high-tech occupations as well as the H-4 visa for spouses, as well as H-2Bs for temporary non-agricultural workers and most J-1 visas for exchange visitors—which many ski areas and related businesses utilize.

The order restricts the ability of American companies with global operations and international companies with U.S. branches to transfer foreign executives and other employees to the United States for months or years-long stints. And it blocks the spouses of foreigners who are employed at companies in the United States. Experts say that up to 525,000 foreign workers could be kept out of the United States this year.

This announcement can't come at a worse time for the ski industry that depends on a seasonal workforce; the backbone of tourist-based communities, ski resorts, retailers, and hotels and restaurants. Colorado, for example, has the third-highest number of H-2B worker visa applications in 2018. Seasonal foreign workers are the drivers of economic growth in tourist-driven communities. They enable ski resorts to open fully—lift operators, instructors, food and beverage, housekeeping, snowmakers—and are also invaluable to our ski resorts, specialty retail shops, and hospitality industry, not to mention the small businesses throughout ski country.

HOW SKI RESORTS HOPE TO OPERATE UNDER COVID-19: *Vail Resorts*, the largest ski resort operator in North America, has extended the usual spring cutoff for the most discounted price on its multi-resort pass product, the "Epic Pass" until Labor Day. "In this moment, with all that is going on in the world, we feel Labor Day is a much better time to have a conversation with our pass holders about next season," said Vail Resorts CEO Rob Katz. Vail's main competitor, *Alterra Mountain Company*, kept a spring deadline for the lowest price on its own product, the "Ikon Pass", but is offering purchasers "adventure assurance": If they decide they don't want to ski in the upcoming season, they can convert their unused 2020/21 season passes at any time into passes for the 2021/22 season. Both companies also promise refunds, pro-rated based on complex formulas, in the event that resorts must close for part or all of next winter due to COVID-19. Ikon Pass sales were "shockingly strong" through the end of May. At that time, the lowest price for the full-featured season pass was \$999. The company has motivated sales by increasing its discount for renewing customers, who were offered the full pass for just \$949.

In light of the pandemic, here is what Ikon and Alterra teams are saying about safety and health on the mountains. *The lowest risk*, of course, is coming down the mountain. *Riding a chairlift*? It's probably fine — you share someone's space for five minutes, but it's outside, it's usually windy, you can probably get away with it, and even better if riding with your own group. *Taking a gondola*? You probably want to open them up a little bit and ventilate them, have some amount of fresh air going in, and get people to wear face masks. Again, that's better if you can be within your own group. What is incredibly high risk, is if you have an indoor space—inside lodges, dining areas, bars. To the extent resorts are open, here's what a responsible ski trip during COVID-19 would look like: going to a resort that doesn't require a trip on an airplane. Driving to the mountain in your own car or staying walking distance from the lifts. Riding chairlifts together with a small, consistent group, such as your family. Keeping your face covered with your neck warmer or balaclava when in close contact with people outside your party. Eating outdoors, or at your own condo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DISNEYLAND: California's *Disneyland* turns 65 today! We've all spent many fun hours at this wonderful, exciting playground. Whether you were 6 or 60 when you went for the first time.... wasn't it great!

FAR WEST'S 90TH CELEBRATION: *Still happening!* Far West Ski Association is turning 90 on October 7, 2020. A celebration of **some kind** is still in the works, but remains to be seen in what form. We are preparing a "*Celebration Book*", a compilation of the history of FWSA in its current form, and plan to have that available at that time. Advertisements for your business or organization is available. Any advertisements should be made **right now**, through Leigh Gieringer, Publisher of the Far West Skiers Guide at: fwsq2@cox.net.

AMAZON SMILES WITH FAR WEST SKI FOUNDATION: Far West Ski Foundation is a participating charitable organization with *Amazon*. Please consider signing up for the *Amazon Smile Charitable Program* and select the Far West Ski Foundation as your charity. Amazon will then donate a percentage of each purchase to FWSF, with no added cost to you.

FAR WEST TRAVEL

FAR WEST 2020 ADVENTURE TRIP: *Postponed to September 2021.* Due to the Covid-19 virus, Far West is working on a postponed Adventure trip to *Croatia* in September, 2021. For further information, contact Debbie Stewart for more information: fwsaintltrl@prodigy.net.

FAR WEST 2020 DIVE TRIP: *Officially Cancelled.* While Cozumel reopened the week of June 22nd, the Iberostar Cozumel Resort has set their reopening date as November 1st, after our trip dates of October 3-10, 2020. After careful deliberation, research, and serious health & safety considerations, FWSA has decided to officially cancel the 2020 Cozumel Dive Trip.

FWSA SUN VALLEY SKI WEEK 2021: *Spots Still Available!* FWSA Councils are selling the 2021 Sun Valley Ski Week January 30—February 6th. Contact your Council Trip Leader to reserve your lodging. We are selling hotel rooms at Sun Valley Inn and Sun Valley Lodge, as well as 2 & 3-bedroom Lodge Apartments. Trip package includes lodging and FWSA and Council parties. Additional costs for lift tickets, group air/ground, and Council Challenge races. Free shuttle to town, ski hill, and activities for non-skiers/boarders! Space is limited so sign up now. NO FWSA fees to cancel prior to October 10th. Go to: www.fwsa.org, for Trip Leader contact information or contact Nancy Ellis, fwsatravelnancy@sbcglobal.net.

FWSA 2021 SOLDEN SKI WEEK: *Information Coming Soon!* *Holidaze Ski Tours* has been granted the contract on this trip. Dates are February 19 – February 27, 2021. The trip will have an extension to *Southern Spain*, from February 27 – March 7, 2021. Stay tuned for more information.

FWSA 2021 ZERMATT MINI SKI WEEK: *Registration Open Soon* for the Far West Mini Ski Week. March 21-26, 2021 are the dates set for the event, at the beautiful *Zermatt Utah Resort & Spa*. Contact Gloria Raminha, trip leader for this trip: garski2011@gmail.com, or 661-800-8229. Watch the FWSA website for sign-up details.

FWSA 2021 INSIDE PASSAGE CRUISE TO ALASKA: *Spots Still Available!* on the FWSA 2021 *Alaska Cruise* and *Denali Tour* scheduled for June 19—30. Sign up soon, and you may still qualify for the *Special Deal*—Free Premium Beverage Package; Free Gratuities; and Free Wi-Fi. There are three trip options available: Denali Tour Only June 19—23; Alaska Inside Passage Cruise Only June 23—30; or full trip Denali Tour/Alaska Inside Passage Cruise June 19—30. Contact Nancy Ellis, fwsatravelnancy@sbcglobal.net, for more information or go to the FWSA website, www.fwsa.org for information and registration forms.

FWSA SUMMER 2021 CHILE SKI/ADVENTURE TRIP: *Valle Nevado, Chile* ski trip with extension to *Atacama Desert* is currently being researched for details of Atacama Desert conditions. Possible dates would be late July or August, 2021.

FAR WEST 2021 DIVE TRIP: The 2021 Dive Trip has been contracted and will be October 9-16, 2021 to the wonderful Anthony's Key Resort in Roatan, Honduras! We have great pricing for their top of the line Key Deluxe lodging, meals, and 6 days of 3 tank boat dives. The registration forms and additional information will be available by the end of July.

OTHER FWSA INTERNATIONAL TRIPS UNDER CONSIDERATION: FWSA International Ski Week, 2022 to *Madonna Di Campiglio, Italy* was voted on at April, 2019 Board meeting. An *Africa Adventure Trip* has been approved for 2022, going to central and east Africa. And, a *Galapagos Adventure Trip* has been approved by the FWSA Board for 2024.

FAR WEST COMMUNICATIONS

FWSA WEBSITE: Our newest website has been live for 6 months now. We continue to add content and grow the site. Take some time to review and suggest changes and additions if you have any. We are always looking to make improvements and you may see, or catch something we don't, so let us know your thoughts. Our Publications are ALL available on the website. Look under ***Publications*** in the "***Member Corner***" drop down. You can also subscribe to the *News Flash* simply by updating your member profile and check the "***News Flash Subscription***".

SPECTACULAR PHOTOS - RESORTS AROUND THE WORLD: Jimmy Petterson, friend and a FWSA award-winning writer and photographer has another book out. If you're interested in seeing some incredible scenery, covering seven continents, visiting over 500 ski resorts in 70+ countries; experience world famous resorts, heli-ski destinations, glacier skiing, and unique and fun places, consider his *Skiing Around the World Volumes I & II*. **Contact: Leigh Gieringer 480.600.6099 / lgieringer2@cox.net for inquiries and orders.**

stay safe! stay healthy!